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Old names, but new faces

Offspring of term-limited Council pols win big

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The more things changed in the City Council, the more they stayed the same.

Thanks to term limits, nearly three dozen new candidates were elected in Tuesday's primary, but many of their names are already well known in city government.

That's because among the winners were many children of politicians scions and several elected officials.

According to unofficial tallies, the political sons and daughters who won races for Council seats included Peter Vallone Jr., Jose Serrano, David Weprin, Helen Foster and Yvette Clarke.

Former state legislators who can now take Council seats include Al Vann, Larry Seabrook, Melinda Katz and Oliver Koppell.

"There aren't a lot of folks who came out of nowhere," said political consultant Evan Stavisky. "Between family members and former elected officials, there certainly will be some stability."

There were some fresh names among the *familiar ones*: John Liu appeared likely to win the Council seat in Flushing, Queens, which would make him the panel's first Asian-American member; and Bill deBlasio, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, who won in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Other winners were Democratic political bosses in the Bronx and Queens, widely seen as having strengthened their hands.

Candidates supported by Queens Democratic Party Leader Tom Manton won nine out of 14 Council seats. And Queens party leaders are confident they can work with the other five.

Like Manton, Bronx boss Roberto Ramirez supported the winning borough president candidate, as well as the victors in five out of eight Council races.

Two keys were losses by party foes Pedro G. Espada and his father, Pedro Espada Jr. The father lost the borough president race to Adolfo Carrion, and his son lost a Council race to Serrano.

In Brooklyn, Democratic Party leader Clarence Norman did not do as well. In two key races, his lieutenant, Steven Cohn, lost to insurgent David Yassky, and party pick Letitia James lost to James Davis.

But the organization backed two other big winners — Domenic Recchia and Al Vann — which keeps Norman's hand involved in picking the next Council speaker.

While the next mayor will influence who will replace Peter Vallone in the powerful speaker's post, insiders say the bosses also will have a say.

Still, the large number of new faces will certainly throw some chaos into the works.

"Right now, it's a crapshoot," said political consultant Hank Sheinkopf. "It will be deal-making brought to a new art form."

But he warns that the World Trade Center tragedy may limit the horse-trading.

"Because of the crisis, you have to wonder how much time spent on politics the public will tolerate," Sheinkopf said.

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